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Public Sector Change, Person–Organization Fit, and Work Attitudes: A Mediation Model**Abstract**

Organizational change is a typical phenomenon within public sector agencies in OECD countries. An increasing number of studies in the literature examine the implementation of change and its resulting impact on the work attitudes of public sector employees; however, little is known about the extent to which change management processes impact on employees' work attitudes. This study aims to address this issue by developing a path model underpinned by change management and public service motivation literature. The path model was tested on a sample of 308 managerial and non-managerial public sector employees from the U.S. The results provide further empirical evidence on the types of change initiatives on nursing work and change management processes being implemented. Public sector agencies in the sample implemented a variety of change initiatives such as downsizing, layering and empowerment. Employees reported two change management processes: the provision of change-related information and participation in change decision making. While the results indicate that change produces change-induced stressors, change information tends to reduce stressors and, subsequently, role stress. The results also indicate that change management processes are associated with higher levels of public service motivation, which is in turn connected to higher levels of person–organization fit. Person–organization fit was found to partially mediate the relationship between public service motivation and job satisfaction in the context of change.

Organizational change is a typical phenomenon within public sector agencies, particularly in countries such as Australia, the U.K., and the U.S. Most public sector organizations around the world have undergone and continue to undertake far-reaching change, characterized by devolution and delegation of authority and autonomy (Christensen & Lægreid, 2011a). A prominent issue is that organizational change often fails (Beer & Nohria, 2000) and such failure impedes the ability of management to meet strategic organizational objectives. In the field of public sector management, there are a number of studies which focus on the negative consequences of organizational change associated with the implementation of New Public Management (e.g., Im, 2009; Yang & Kasserker, 2009). While the negative connotations associated with New Public Management are well established, there remain many areas in the body of knowledge that could be further developed.

Change management scholars have noted that while there is no shortage of research on change management there is a paucity of research on employees' reactions to change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002: 474 cited in Ritz & Fernandez, 2011). Ritz and Fernandez (2011) urge scholars to undertake more empirical research on employee attitudes towards change in government organizations. While there have been a few studies on change and employee attitudes (e.g. Ritz & Fernandez, 2011; Wright, Christensen, & Isett, 2013), these studies do not examine the change initiatives being implemented. It is important to analyze change initiatives because different initiatives may cause differing levels of change-induced stress. The first aim of the current study is to examine public sector employees' reactions to change management processes in the context of implementing various organizational change initiatives. Particular attention is paid to assessing the impact of change initiatives on participation in change, change information, and change-induced stress.

Other important factors relating to employee adjustment to change are: subjective fit with the employing organization, public service motivation, and the impacts of these on job satisfaction. Individuals whose values are aligned (fit) with that of their organization are more likely to report a higher level of job satisfaction (Newton & Jimmieson, 2008). Also, there is a significant amount of empirical support for the claim that public sector employees' public service motivation is closely associated with job satisfaction (Bright, 2008; Stiejn, 2008; Wright & Pandey, 2008). In other words, having an altruistic attitude, which motivates public sector employees to work towards serving public interests, is likely to have a positive impact on job satisfaction (Bright, 2008). Research also suggests that person–organization fit may mediate the relationship between public service motivation and job satisfaction (Bright, 2008; Wright & Pandey, 2008). There is some support for the idea that individuals who perceive a higher level of fit with their organization will be more accepting and tolerant of change, which will subsequently reduce their interpretation of stressors and adjustment (Meyer, Hecht, Gill, & Toplonytsky, 2010). As such, a second aim of this study is to examine how person–organization fit mediates the relationship between public service motivation and job satisfaction, and between change-induced stressors and job satisfaction. Thirdly, the influence of participation and change information on public service motivation and change-induced stress is examined.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES

Dunford, Palmer, Benveniste, and Crawford (2007) reviewed 100 books and articles relating to change in order to identify the types of practices being used in change management. Nine different types of practices were found, including formation of collaborative networks/alliances, outsourcing of non-core activities, disaggregation of business units, delayering (e.g., reducing hierarchical levels in the organization), reducing internal and external

boundaries, developing flexible work groups, empowering employees, and the use of short-term staffing. These practices have been found to be prevalent in profit and non-profit sectors and are consistent with the practices identified in the public sector by researchers (Stanton, Willis, & Young, 2005). New Public Management-inspired changes to the corporate culture and working conditions have been found to have a detrimental influence on public sector employees (e.g., Diefenbach, 2009). Some of the detrimental outcomes of New Public Management reforms include higher levels of stressors, a decline in job satisfaction and motivation, and an invisible net of managerial power and domination. High levels of stressors are now commonly found in public sector agencies and health sector organizations implementing New Public Management-related reforms (Noblet, Rodwell, & McWilliams, 2006; Teo, Yeung, & Chang, 2012). For example, public and non-profit nurses experienced non-nursing administrative stressors (such as resource and time-related stressors) as health care organizations implemented change initiatives such as downsizing and layering (Teo et al., 2012).

Two change management processes have been found to be critical in successful change implementation. These processes are participation in change decision making and provision of information (DiFonzo & Bordia, 1998; Jimmieson, Terry & Callan, 2004; Wright, Christensen, & Isett, 2013). Effective change management requires participation in change decision making as this creates a sense of ownership of the proposed change amongst employees (Miller, Johnson, & Grau, 1994). Participation and change information create acceptance, which tends to lower levels of anxiety among employees (Bordia et al., 2004). The provision of change-related information allows change agents to build understanding of the need for change (Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010). During organizational change relevant information provides a sense of urgency and updates employees on the change initiative, which minimizes negative outcomes

associated with organizational change (DiFonzo & Bordia, 1998).

It is common for organizational change to have direct and/or indirect effect on public sector work (Jimmieson, Peach, & White, 2008). Communication about organizational change thus helps employees to be in control of the uncertainty that arises due to change initiatives and the resulting effect on their jobs. Noblet and Rodwell (2009) argue that organizational change might be associated with stress, but it is ameliorated by good and timely information. Managers could therefore use participative management principles and effective communication as tools to reinforce culture change (Kim, 2002). The connection between participation, provision of information and change can be conceptualized using the social information processing theory. Social information processing builds on the idea that individuals construct a perceived social reality and provides an explanation regarding how this social reality influences behavior (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). The seminal work of Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) prescribes that individual attitudes or needs are developed from social information, such as the social context of work (what others think) and the consequences that arise from previous attitudes and behavior. The underlying premise of social information processing is that we can learn the most about individual behavior in the workplace by studying the informational and social environment. Work environments, especially how employees receive information about change, have been shown to influence the decision-making process during change (Miller et al., 1994). The social information processing perspective brings to prominence the need for information and communication in facilitating change (Miller et al., 1994). Since information and participation are closely connected we hypothesize that ongoing access to information and decision-making input will be closely associated with the changing working conditions that arise during change programs. Hence we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. Change initiatives are positively associated with the information being provided to employees relating to the change management processes.

Hypothesis 2. Change initiatives are positively associated with the extent to which employees participated in the decision-making process relating to the change management processes.

Hypothesis 3. Change initiatives are positively related to the level of change-induced stressors.

Hypothesis 4. The extent to which employees participated in the change decision-making process is negatively associated with the level of change-induced stressors.

Hypothesis 5. The provision of information relating to change management is negatively associated with the level of change-induced stressors.

Change Processes and Employee Values

Ritz and Fernandez (2011) argue that a factor which influences employee support for change is the values that motivate them to choose to work in the public sector. Organizational change threatens the underlying intrinsic motivation of public sector employees (Ritz & Fernandez, 2011), as evidenced by diminishing job autonomy and control (job resources) and increasing job demands (Giauque, Anderfuhren-Biget, & Varone, 2013). The values of public sector employees are unique for individuals attracted to public sector work and can be examined by adopting the theory of public service motivation. Perry and Wise (1990) defined public service motivation as “an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations” (1990: 368). Wright, Christensen, and Isett (2013) noted that public service motivation as an example of the values of public sector

employees is under-examined in public management literature; public service motivation can be used to understand the behavior and work attitudes of employees.

Public service motivation may play a role in employees' acceptance of change. Research has shown that employees with higher public service motivation are more likely to support organizational change, especially if the changes improved public service provision (Paarlberg & Lavigna, 2010; Wright, Christensen, & Isett, 2013). This is in line with the original description of public service motivation by Perry and Wise (1990), where they suggest that it could increase employee support for public sector innovation and reform as a function of increasing their interest in and commitment to an organization that provides public services. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 6. The extent to which employees participated in the change decision-making process is positively associated the employees' public service motivation.

Hypothesis 7. The provision of information relating to change is positively associated with public service motivation.

There are several ways of operationalizing person–organization fit in the literature (see the review by Verquer, Beehr, & Wagner, 2003). Subjective fit directly measures how well employees believe their own characteristics match those of the organization. Alternatively, objective fit compares an individual's self-characteristics with an independent rating of the organization on those characteristics. Lastly, perceived value congruence compares an individual's rating of both themselves and the organization on like dimensions. It has been argued that an individual's perception of fit may be more important than objective and indirect measures; if an individual believes they do or do not share similar values this may be all that is necessary to influence affective and behavioral outcomes (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown,

Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005).

As discussed previously, employees reported higher levels of stressors from various organizational change reforms (Noblet et al., 2006; Teo, Pick, Newton, Yeung, & Chang, 2013). Noblet, Teo, McWilliams, and Rodwell (2005) noted that during organizational change, public sector employees' job satisfaction is negatively affected by change-induced stressors such as lack of resources to accomplish tasks and insufficient time to complete work on time. Hence, if the change processes are effectively implemented employees' commitment to change would be enhanced, which should result in lower levels of stress and, subsequently, higher job satisfaction (Rafferty & Restubog, 2010). On the other hand, a lack of consultation and information relating to the change process could result in more change-induced stressors, which could result in employees feeling that their values no longer match those of their organization (that is, less person–organization fit). Thus, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 8. Change-induced stressors are negatively associated with person–organization fit.

Hypothesis 9. Change-induced stressors are negatively associated with job satisfaction.

Studies have shown that individuals with greater public service motivation are more satisfied with their public sector jobs and are likely to be committed to the organization (Perry & Wise, 1990; Taylor, 2008). This is because these individuals are working in roles and situations where they are able to satisfy their orientation in delivering services that are good for the community. However, others claimed that the findings are not conclusive (see Wright & Pandey, 2008: 506), and that the effect of public service motivation on job satisfaction is indirect, mediated by person–organization fit which has been found to result in better job satisfaction (Cable & Judge, 1996; Vigoda-Gadot & Meir, 2008). In a recent review on public service

motivation, Perry, Hondeghem, and Wise (2010: 685) urged more research to be conducted into the mediation effect of the relationship between public service motivation and job satisfaction, quoting Wright and Pandey (2008) who suggested that the effect of public service motivation on job satisfaction is mediated by employee–organization value congruence, a form of person–organization fit. Their model offers promising avenues for future research.

Proponents of person–organization fit theory assume that attitudes, behaviors, and other individual-level outcomes result not from the person or organization separately, but rather from the relationship between the two. A meta-analytic review by Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) shows that person–organization fit and job satisfaction are strongly correlated. Therefore, person–organization fit theory assumes that person–organization fit will completely mediate the relationship between public service motivation and job satisfaction of public employees. Hence, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 10. Public service motivation is positively associated with person–organization fit.

Hypothesis 11. Public service motivation is positively associated with job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 12. Person–organization fit is positively associated with job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 13. Person–organization fit mediates the relationship of public service motivation on job satisfaction.

The hypothesized model is shown in Figure 1. The hypothesized model will be analyzed using Partial Least Squares (PLS) structural equation modeling (SEM) path analysis.

Insert Figure 1 about here

METHODS

Data and Sample

Data were collected by an online data provider (Zoomerang.com) on behalf of the research team. Previous studies using this company include Thau, Bennett, Mitchell, and Marrs (2009) and Mayer, Thau, Workman, Van Dijke, and De Cremer (2012). Members of the provider signed up to participate in academic research studies. The panel of members recruited by Zoomerang.com is comparable to those represented in the U.S. Census in terms of age and annual household income (personal communication, Zoomerang.com, 2010).

Altogether 1,296 panel members who matched the inclusion criteria (region: southern region of the U.S., age: above 18 years old; employment: government/military service) were sent an email containing a URL of the survey. We received 308 usable surveys (response rate = 24 percent). Respondents were mainly female (59 percent) and most of them were in full-time employment (87 percent). The largest group of employers was federal and state agencies, followed by local counties.¹ The respondents were aged between 41–60 years (55.5 percent). Most of the respondents occupied non-managerial positions (58.4 percent), followed by an equal number of senior and middle management appointments.

Data were input into SPSS for initial statistical analysis. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted using principal axis factoring with oblimin rotation (see Table 1). Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using AMOS. *SmartPLS* (Ringle, Wende, & Will, 2005) was utilized to analyze the hypothesized path model. PLS is a technique used for estimating path coefficients in causal models and the software allows for the simultaneous testing of hypotheses (see Hair, Hult,

¹ Prior to combining the dataset for path analysis we undertook an ANOVA to determine if there was any difference in the variables according to employer grouping. The result showed that respondents from the military and armed forces (N=16) have higher means than the remaining two groups for “change information”. Due to the small sample size we decided to combine the data for statistical analysis.

Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013). It is also appropriate for samples which do not have the usual normality assumptions and is considered appropriate for small sample sizes (see Chin, 2010).² In this instance we then undertook Sobel's test to test for the mediation hypothesis.

 Insert Table 1 about here

Variables

Average variance of estimates (AVEs) and composite reliability coefficients of the scales are reported in the results section. All of the scales were previously validated and have been previously used in the literature. Table 1 provides a full list of the items.

Organizational change initiatives. This construct assesses the extent to which public sector organizations have implemented a series of organizational change initiatives. As there was no definite list of organizational change initiatives in the literature with the exception of the items reported by Palmer and Dunford (2001) and Dunford et al. (2007), we decided to adopt these for the current study. Sample items include delaying, outsourcing, flexible work and empowerment. Respondents were asked to what extent their organization had adopted a number of change initiatives in the past five years. This scale was based on a five-point Likert scale (from “not at all” to “completely”).

Participation in change. We adopted a five-item, five-point scale (Jimmieson, Peach & White, 2008) to operationalize “Participation in Change”. Ranging from “not at all” to “a great deal”, it assesses the respondents' perceptions of their participation in the decision-making

² As reported in Table 1, the path model has seven constructs (47 items). To meet the minimum sample size requirement for factor analysis we would require approximately 470 data points; hence, we decided to use the PLS technique as it allows for a smaller sample size than other covariance-based SEM techniques.

processes surrounding changes in their jobs. Similar items have recently been used by Wright, Christensen, and Isett (2013).

Change information. We used a five-item scale by Jimmieson et al. (2008) to ascertain participants' perceptions of the amount of change information provided and their understanding of what the change involved. The similar items were also used by Wright, Christensen and Issett (2013). The items were rated from "not at all" to "a great deal".

Change-induced stressors. It has been reported that public sector employees experience several change-induced stressors (see Noblet et al., 2006; Teo et al., 2013). We used a five-point rating scale ranging from "not at all" to "major source of stress". Results of this analysis provided a one-dimensional, six-item scale. Exploratory factor analysis supported the creation of the "Change-induced Stressor" scale.

Public service motivation. Following Wright, Christensen, and Pandey (2013), we used the five-item, global measure of the public service motivation scale developed by Perry (1996). As noted by Wright and Pandey (2008), most studies on public service motivation do not use the 24-item scale and, furthermore, the short-form scale has shown to have good reliability across a number of studies (see Wright, Christensen, & Pandey, 2013).

Person–organization fit. We utilized the four-item scale from Cable and DeRue (2002) to operationalize subjective person–organization fit. The items were rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Higher values signify higher person–organization fit.

Job satisfaction. We employed a 15-item scale by Warr, Cook, and Wall (1979) to measure participants' satisfaction with a range of work-related issues including physical working

conditions, career prospects, colleagues and job security. Respondents rated the items on a seven-point scale ranging from “extremely dissatisfied” to “extremely satisfied”.

Validity and reliability. The sample size is considered to be sufficient to achieve a medium effect size of 0.80 for a path model with seven constructs (Green, 1991: 503). Significance of the PLS parameter estimates was established by using the bootstrap option incorporated within the *SmartPLS* software. Bootstrapping with 500 sub-samples is carried out to provide extra confidence that the results are not sample-specific by using repeated random samples drawn from the data. It was also important to ensure discriminant validity of the reflective construct. This was assessed using AVE (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Collecting data from a single source requires conducting checks for common method bias. In this study ex ante strategies were undertaken to check for the presence of common method bias (see Chang, van Witteloostuijn, & Eden, 2010; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003). The first consideration was survey design. The first step was to develop different scale endpoints and formats for the independent and dependent measures. The items were written in such a way so as to ensure that respondents were not looking to provide “right” or “wrong” answers, and respondents were explicitly asked to answer as honestly as possible. Once the survey questions were completed they were placed in random order and then piloted to ensure there were no items that included ambiguous, vague or unfamiliar terms. The survey was then administered in such a way that respondents were assured anonymity and confidentiality.

Three statistical checks for common method bias were also deployed. First, a single common latent factor analysis was computed using the *AMOS* software. The analysis showed that the paths accounted for 12 percent of the variance in the common latent factor. The next test utilized a common method factor (see Podsakoff et al., 2003; Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). We used

“Formalization” (Palmer & Dunford, 2001), a five-item reflective scale, as the single common method bias factor. Sample items include “rules and procedures manuals” and “documents on fringe benefits”. Results showed that none of the paths from this method factor to any of the constructs in our model were statistically significant. These results support the conclusion that common method bias was not a concern.

Finally, Harman’s ex-post one factor test was also conducted (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). All the variables used were entered into an unrotated factor analysis to determine the number of factors. The analysis produced eight factors (with eigenvalues greater than 1.0) with the largest factor accounting for 14.7 percent of the variance. This result suggests that common method variance is not an issue in the current study.

The quality of the proposed structural model was assessed using R-square of the dependent variable (Job Satisfaction) and the Stone-Geisser Q-square test for predictive relevance (Chin, 2010). Since the values were stable for both omission distances and the majority of the Q-squares were greater than zero we were confident that the model was stable and satisfied the predictive relevance requirement.³

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics are reported in Table 2. The results suggest that the model has discriminant validity. This study examines the extent to which public sector employees’ subjective fit is influenced by the process of change and change-induced stressors. The path model has a high goodness of fit as indicated by the global goodness of fit index of 0.39 and the R-square of the dependent variable, Job Satisfaction, is 35.3 percent, which suggests that the

³ Unlike other covariance-based SEM techniques, *SmartPLS* does not have an in-built computation of goodness of fit indices (see discussion in Hair et al., 2013). Tenenhaus, Vinzi, Chatelin, and Lauro’s (2005) global goodness of fit index was calculated to determine the fit of data to the path model.

model has a large effect size. As reported in Table 3, all but two hypotheses were supported. Two hypotheses were unsupported (Hypotheses 4: Participation in Change → Change-induced Stressors, and 11: Public Service Motivation → Job Satisfaction).

Insert Tables 2 and 3 about here

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The primary aim of the current study was to determine if the implementation of various change initiatives has an effect on the person–organization fit and job satisfaction of public sector employees. In the first instance, this study identified the prevalence of several change initiatives in public sector agencies. These initiatives were similar to those found in Australia (Palmer & Dunford, 2001), such as outsourcing, empowerment, delayering, short-term staffing, disaggregation, networks/alliances, reduced external boundaries, reduced internal boundaries, and flexible work groups. As a result, managerial and non-managerial employees experienced several context-specific, change-induced stressors. These context-specific, change-induced stressors (see Table 1), which relate to the domain of time pressure, workload, lack of information, and decision making, have been found to relate to increasing strain and job dissatisfaction of public sector employees (e.g., Noblet et al., 2006).

Results of the analysis suggest that as senior management implement various change initiatives it is critical that managerial and non-managerial employees are engaged with the change process via the provision of change information and participation in change decision making. Provision of change information was found to be the most significant initiative in reducing domain-specific, change-induced stressors. This finding is consistent with the literature

(e.g., Bordia et al., 2004; Pick, Teo, & Yeung, 2012), as employees' perceptions of the quality of change communication can reduce the anxiety arising from the change initiatives. This supports social information processing theory which suggests that, in the change context, an employee's perception of their job characteristics can be influenced by information they receive about change (Miller et al., 1994).

Contrary to our hypothesis, participation in change decision making was not significant in reducing change-induced stressors. This is not surprising as the literature is not consistent about the effect of participation in change decision making. While some scholars (e.g., Bordia et al., 2004; Jimmieson et al., 2004) suggest that participation in change decision making could lead to the reduction of stress our finding is consistent with other research which did not find a relationship between participation and change-induced stressors (Teo et al., 2013). This finding suggests that effective leadership and senior management commitment are crucial in engaging employees in change (Grissom, 2012) as senior management may impede the significance of participative management.

The relationships hypothesized in hypotheses 6 and 7 were found to be supported in the analysis, suggesting that participation in the change decision-making process is positively associated with employees' public service motivation and that there is a positive relationship between the provision of information relating to change and public service motivation. This suggests that public service motivation can be positively affected by change implementation processes. This finding contributes to the literature on change and employee attitudes (Ritz & Fernandez, 2011; Wright, Christensen & Isett, 2013). The current study suggests that employees with high public service motivation tend have higher work attitudes in times of change. It seems that when public sector agencies adopt effective change implementation processes (such as

change information and participation in change) public service motivation is increased, which can in turn enhance support for change.

Further significant relationships were found to support hypotheses 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13, though hypothesis 11 was not found to be significant. This lack of support for hypothesis 11 could be because public service motivation has an indirect, positive effect on job satisfaction through its influence on employee–organization value congruence (Wright & Pandey, 2008) rather than a direct relationship as suggested in the hypothesis.

At a strategic level effective implementation of organizational change initiatives is clearly vital; poor implementation has the potential to unsettle people by changing their perceptions that they fit with the organization and reducing job satisfaction. The flow-on effect of this misfit is potentially deleterious to employees' abilities to frame stressors more as challenges. Moreover, such a situation can ultimately lead to less satisfied employees at a critical time in an organization (i.e., during change). While senior management can focus on helping employees adopt various strategies to cope effectively with stress the current study shows that person–organization fit is an important variable, especially as it is associated with higher job satisfaction and motivation for public sector work.

In line with recent research, we found that well-implemented organizational change may have a positive effect on the motivation of public service employees (Paarlberg & Lavigna, 2010; Wright, Christensen, & Pandey, 2013). In applying ideas from social information processing, our results suggest that when implementing change, participation and the provision of information are both needed to ensure employees affected by change understand and support its aims and objectives. This in turn increases employee support for public sector innovation and reform as a function of increasing their interest in and commitment to an organization that

provides public services (Perry & Wise, 1990). Our research identifies the mediating effects of person–organization fit, suggesting that motivation affects person–organization fit which in turn influences the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction. When taken in the context of current research this relationship could be seen as being cyclical in nature, in that greater person–organization fit enhances job satisfaction but this is also connected to enhanced motivation. In other words, when employees are motivated they perceive themselves to have a better “fit” with an organization (i.e., have person–organization fit). Similarly, employees who feel as though they have a good fit (i.e., have high levels of person–organization fit) develop feelings of job satisfaction. In both cases it is likely that employees will be able to cope better with stress associated with change and tend to be better motivated.

While public service motivation can help explain or even generate support for change the way in which management implements the change is much more important. In light of these substantive patterns, if we were to advise managers initiating change our first recommendations would be that they focus on providing employees with clear and timely information and opportunities to participate in the change process over human resource policies that favor recruiting employees with high public service motivation.

Managerial and Practical Implications

According to social information processing theory, informational and social environments are particularly important factors that determine employee attitudes and behavior (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). The findings from this study build on the underlying social information processing premise, depicting that information provided about organizational change has a positive impact on public service motivation and negative influence on the stress induced by organizational change. The implication for management is that there needs to be a focus on

information provided about the organizational change initiative and the process that will be undertaken to implement the change initiative. As mentioned, change information is particularly important because it allows management (change agents) to educate employees about the change, and it helps to develop a sense of urgency and to be able to provide employees with timely updates about the change process. In addition, such information about the change assists management to create employee acceptance of the change. The outcome is that the more information public sector employees have about organizational change and the associated implementation processes the less stress the employees are likely to feel due to the change, and as a result they are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs.

Another important implication for management can be derived from the findings associated with participation in change. The results provide support the argument that managers who involve their public sector subordinates in organizational change processes are more likely to have employees who are higher in public service motivation, person–organization fit, and overall satisfaction with their jobs. However, the findings also indicate that participation in change was not significantly related to change-induced stress, which provides another important implication for management. That is, managers who need to address issues associated with change-induced stress should focus on providing information about the change as opposed to focusing on employee involvement. More specifically, participation in change is an important factor; however, it would not be the best approach to reduce change-induced stress, particularly when providing further change information is an option.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the theoretical framework, results and discussion presented in this study illuminate the key influences of participation and change information provision associated with

different types of change initiatives. In addition, these processes were found to impact on the level of public service motivation of public employees as these changes have an impact on their stress levels. A major contribution of this study is that it has found some convergence in the types of change initiatives being adopted in the American public sector with those found in Australia. Furthermore, it extends earlier research to identify the pathways through which organizational change cascades through processes (participation and information) to explicit affective reactions (stress) and then to consequences (subjective fit and job satisfaction). As key change agents public sector leaders and managers have the dual responsibility of implementing organizational reforms which ensure agency staff have sufficient levels of job satisfaction to be able to carry out these new ways of operating.

Limitations and Future Research Implications

There are a number of limitations that should be considered when assessing the generalizability of the findings. This study is limited in that it is a cross-sectional study. Future studies could adopt a longitudinal design to minimize the effect of common method bias (Oreg, Vakola, & Armenakis, 2011), collect data from multi-raters, employ objective indicators to supplement self-report information, and focus on particular occupational groups.

It is also important to take another look at the direction of the causal relationship between public service motivation and person–organization fit. Kim (2012) suggests that public service motivation has a co-variance relationship with person–organization fit. We argue that the relationship might have cyclical characteristics and it would be worthwhile for researchers to pursue hypotheses about whether there is empirical support for the existence of cycles and, if so, if there are cycles or spiral of gains at different organizational levels.

The current study provides useful insights into the value of social information processing theory for understanding change in the public sector. In particular we provide empirical evidence about how managerial and non-managerial employees respond to change. We found that the “need for information” in facilitating change should be placed alongside the nature of change and how employees respond to that change. We extend recent research that connects provision of information to participation in change-related decision making in the public sector. While both processes result in less change-induced stressors they also re-enforce the level of public service motivation among public sector employees. We also provide some evidence to support the work of Oreg et al. (2011) in which it is suggested that organizational change can be best understood by examining the connections between antecedents (change initiatives), explicit reactions (stress) and change consequences (subjective fit and job satisfaction).

In this research we have augmented the social information processing theory with public service motivation to develop new, empirical insights into the types of change initiatives and the change processes that are being implemented in the public sector. This study highlights the importance of change information and participation in change decision making in the era of “post-New Public Management” (Christensen & Lægreid, 2011b) in the public sector context.

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TABLE 1 Factor Loadings

Items	Job Sat1	Chg Init's	PSM	Chg Info	Stress	P-O Fit	P in Chg	Job Sat2
1. Industrial relations between management and employees	.71							
2. Your opportunity to use your abilities	.58							
3. The amount of responsibility you are given	.49							
4. Your immediate boss	.58							
5. The recognition you get for good work	.48							
6. The amount of variety in your job	.47							
7. The attention paid to suggestions you make	.63							
8. The way your organization is managed	.59							
9. Your chance of promotion	.47							
10. Reduced external boundaries		.83						
11. Networks/alliances		.78						
12. Reduced internal boundaries		.78						
13. Flexible work groups		.78						
14. Empowerment		.73						
15. Delayering		.72						
16. Disaggregation		.70						
17. Short-term staffing		.64						
18. Outsourcing		.60						
19. Making a difference in society means more to me than personal achievements.			.86					
20. I am not afraid to go to bat for the rights of others, even if it means that I will be ridiculed.			.70					
21. I am prepared to make enormous sacrifices for the good of society.			.67					
22. Meaningful public service is very important to me.			.62					
23. I am often reminded by daily events about how			.55					

Items	Job Sat1	Chg Init's	PSM	Chg Info	Stress	P-O Fit	P in Chg	Job Sat2
dependent we are on one another.								
24. Overall, how clearly do you think you are informed about the nature of the changes that take place in your organisation?				.92				
25. How clearly are you informed about when specific changes will be implemented?				.91				
26. To what extent is information about changes directly communicated to you?				.87				
27. How well do you think you are informed about the implications that changes will have for your job?				.85				
28. How clearly are you informed about the reasons underlying organisational change?				.79				
29. Insufficient staff to complete work on time and to standard expected					.80			
30. Not having enough say in what happens in your organisation					.76			
31. Lack of information on why certain decisions are made					.76			
32. Other staff not pulling their weight					.74			
33. Long delays in addressing problems					.70			
34. Pay not as good as other people doing similar work					.57			
35. My personal values match the organization's values						.91		
36. The things that I think are important are also the things that are important to the organization						.90		
37. The organization's values are a good fit with the things that I value						.88		
38. The things that I value in life are very similar to the things that the organization values						.77		

Items	Job Sat1	Chg Init's	PSM	Chg Info	Stress	P-O Fit	P in Chg	Job Sat2
39. To what extent do you get the opportunity to take part in decisions related to changes that affect your job?							.92	
40. Overall, how much participation have you had regarding change processes that affect your job?							.88	
41. How much influence do you have over how changes that affect your job will be implemented?							.86	
42. How much involvement do you have regarding changes that are occurring in your organization?							.80	
43. To what extent can you voice your concerns about changes that affect your job?							.60	
44. Your hours of work								.80
45. The physical work conditions								.62
46. The freedom to choose your own method of working								.58
47. Your job security								.56
Eigenvalues	14.75	6.39	3.68	3.16	2.19	1.52	1.38	1.07

Note: N=308

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Job Sat1: Job satisfaction factor 1; Chg Init's: Change initiatives; PSM: Public service motivation; Chg Info: Change information; P-O fit: Person–organization fit; P in Chg: Participation in change decision making; Job Sat2: Job satisfaction factor 2

TABLE 2 Descriptive Statistics, AVE and Intercorrelations

	Mean	SD	AVE	α	1	2	3
1. Gender	1.59	0.49	-	-	1.00		
2. Managerial level	3.26	1.00	-	-	.23***	1.00	
3. Change Initiatives	2.19	0.86	.59	.93	-.07	-.15**	1.00
4. Change Information	2.92	1.04	.87	.97	-.16**	-.15**	.12*
5. Participate in Change	2.54	1.01	.82	.96	-.19**	-.37***	.28***
6. Change-Induced Stressors	2.43	1.07	.65	.92	.19**	-.01	.12*
7. Public Service Motivation	3.46	0.77	.60	.88	.01	-.19**	.04
8. Person–Organization Fit	3.02	0.93	.89	.97	-.15**	-.17**	.11
9. Job Satisfaction	3.15	1.19	.92	.96	-.11	-.14*	-.04

	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Gender						
2. Managerial level						
3. Change Initiatives						
4. Change Information	1.00					
5. Participate in Change	.67***	1.00				
6. Change-Induced Stressors	-.43***	-.27***	1.00			
7. Public Service Motivation	.29***	.27***	.01	1.00		
8. Person–Organization Fit	.88***	.66***	-.43***	.40***	1.00	
9. Job Satisfaction	.48***	.41***	-.48***	.23***	.54***	1.00

N=308; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

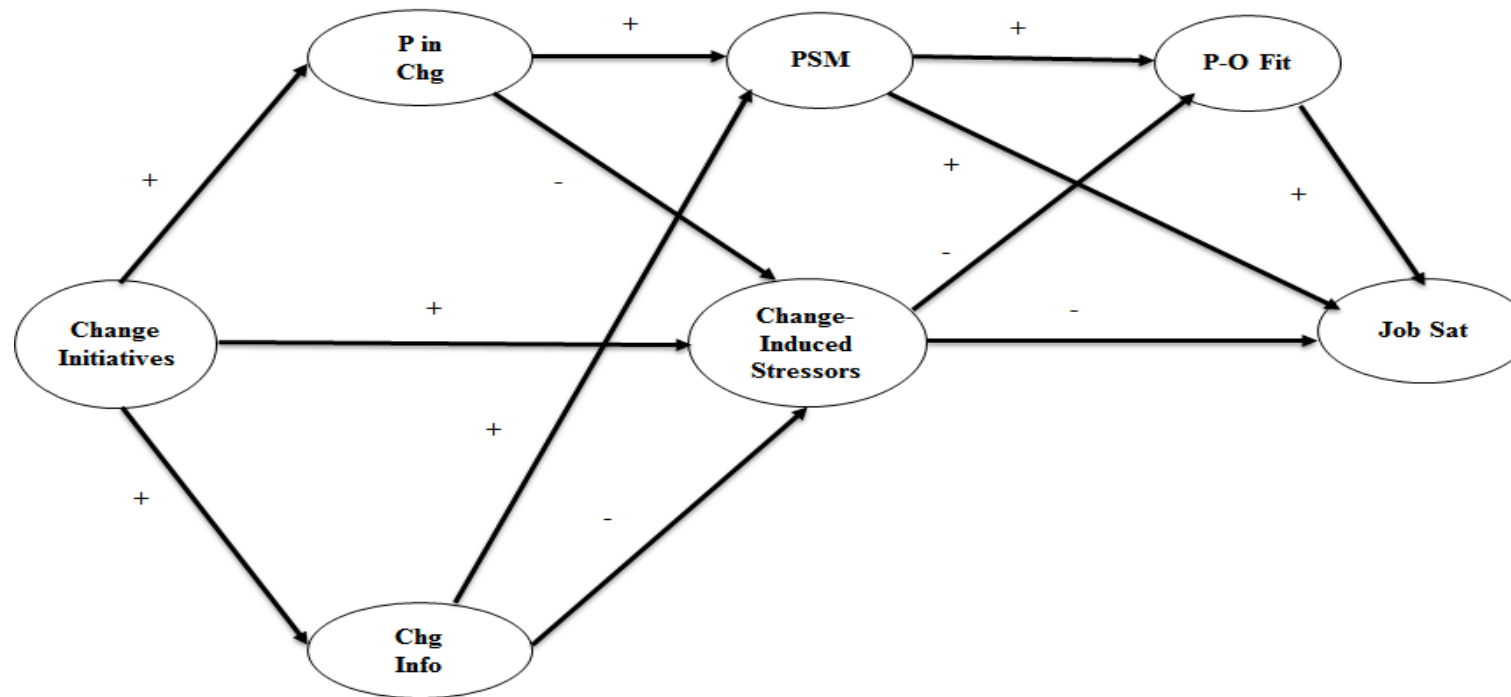
TABLE 3. Results of Path Analysis

	Path Coefficients	t-statistic	Sig. level
H1. Change Initiatives → Participation in Change	.31	5.14	***
H2. Change Initiatives → Change Information	.16	2.22	*
H3. Change Initiatives → Change-induced Stressors	.16	2.84	**
H4. Participation in Change → Change-induced Stressors	-.03	.42	ns
H5. Change Information → Change-induced Stressors	-.45	5.89	***
H6. Participation in Change → Public Service Motivation	.14	2.01	*
H7. Change Information → Public Service Motivation	.23	3.06	**
H8. Change-induced Stressors → Person–Organization Fit	-.34	7.75	***
H9. Change-induced Stressors → Job Satisfaction	-.40	7.66	***
H10. Public Service Motivation → Person–Organization Fit	.48	10.21	***
H11. Public Service Motivation → Job Satisfaction	.10	1.68	ns
H12. Person–Organization Fit → Job Satisfaction	.28	5.08	***
H13. Person–Organization Fit mediating Public Service Motivation → Job Satisfaction	Sobel's= 4.55, p<0.001		

N=308

Ns: not significant

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

FIGURE 1. Proposed Research Model

Note:

Chg Info: Change information

Job Sat: Job satisfaction

P in Chg: Participation in change decision making

P-O fit: Person–organization fit

PSM: Public service motivation

A method factor (Lindell & Whitney, 2001) was also incorporated into the model to check for common method bias